

Corbin Newman
Regional Forester
U.S. Forest Service-Southwestern Regional Office
333 Broadway SE, Albuquerque, NM 87102

April 9, 2010

Dear Corbin:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) would like to express enthusiastic support for the Southwest Jemez Restoration Project. Our support for this project is based upon our perspective on the ecological significance of the area, our experience in working successfully with a number of partners within the landscape, and upon the urgent need to address the imminent threats to the landscape. In sum, we believe that there are a number of enabling conditions which taken together, will result in a very high likelihood of success for this proposed restoration project.

We have invested in collaborative fire restoration in the Jemez Mountains for almost ten years. The Jemez has been identified as one of TNC's priority conservation areas in the Southern Rocky Mountain Ecoregion, and is therefore a key landscape for maintaining the biological biodiversity of New Mexico. In addition, our scientific analyses show much of the Jemez Mountains to be threatened by altered fire regimes, and impacts from climate change. As a result, over the last year we have conducted three climate change related workshops for Jemez managers and their partners. Through these sessions we, along with local scientists and land managers, are trying to develop practical climate change adaptation strategies for the landscape. We believe that the Southwest Jemez landscape restoration strategy addresses current fire risk and contributes to building forest resilience to likely impacts from a changing climate. As you are aware, several large and damaging crownfires have occurred in the last two decades in the Jemez Mountains, including the Cerro Grande Fire. Therefore, given the current conditions of the forests and a projected warming and drying trend, we believe that there is an urgent need to address this risk now.

Our organization has been part of the core collaboration team that developed the restoration strategy, and we plan to continue our engagement throughout project planning and implementation. TNC is also a member of the statewide collaborative group that developed the New Mexico Forest Restoration Principles, which will provide a guiding framework for the project.

We encourage you to recommend the Southwest Jemez Project for consideration at the national level. There are both a demonstrated need and a spirit of collaboration that make the Southwest Jemez an outstanding candidate landscape for the CFLRP program.

Sincerely,



Terry Sullivan
State Director, The Nature Conservancy in New Mexico